STOUTONIA

VOL. 111 ISSUE 1 • SPRING 2021

ROSE BARKER/STOUTONIA

STOUT'S HEATING PLANT • FASHION AT HOME • HEROES WELCOME • FACULTY CARDS LIFT SPIRITS

CONTRIBUTORS

The members of Stoutonia were asked to share their responses to the following questions.

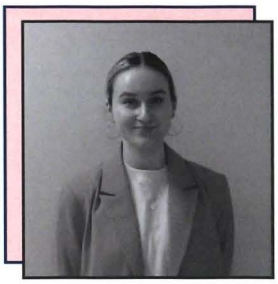
1. What is your favorite food on campus?
2. Where do you like to hangout or study on campus?
3. What is a new hobby you picked up during quarvantine?

RYAN MEZERA
CHIEF COPY EDITOR

- Chicken mash bowl, of course
- Top three floors of the library
- Disc golf

ISABEL ROBERTS
PRODUCTION MANAGER
& LAYOUT DESIGNER

- Chicken Ranch Snack Wrap
- 2nd floor of the MSC with the big windows
- Sewing & upcycling clothing



VIOLET NELSON
CAMPUS WRITER

- A sub from Buns & Bowls
- I used to like sitting under the stairs in the MSC
- I started a little business called Your Favorite Flower where I made accessories and custom orders

ROBERT TIMMLER
ENTERTAINMENT
WRITER

- Fried Chicken Sandwich
- UW Stout Library Floor 2 Comic Book Section
- Making 1000-piece puzzles.

ROSE BARKER
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

DR. KATE EDENBORG
FACULTY ADVISOR

- Sugar cookies or stir fry
- Children's literature library on 3rd floor of Harvey Hall
- Writing creative non-fiction

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HEATING WISCONSIN'S POLYTECHNIC

RYAN MEZERA

UW-STOUT/CONTRIBUTED

Heating plant on UW-Stout campus.

Although it towers over other campus structures with a 204-foot smokestack, the University of Wisconsin-Stout Heating Plant is a major essential of everyday student life that tends to get overlooked.

The nonstop work of UW-Stout's Heating plant, located on the hill of Third Street E. in the heart of main campus, operates as the university's personal heating source.

The heating plant burned primarily coal for over a century in the process of converting it to steam to heat the school, burning anywhere from 1,200 to 4,000 tons of coal per year. The plant proclaimed its complete transition to natural gas in March 2020 when it eradicated the use of coal and implemented an all-natural gas and heating oil cookbook to cut emissions.

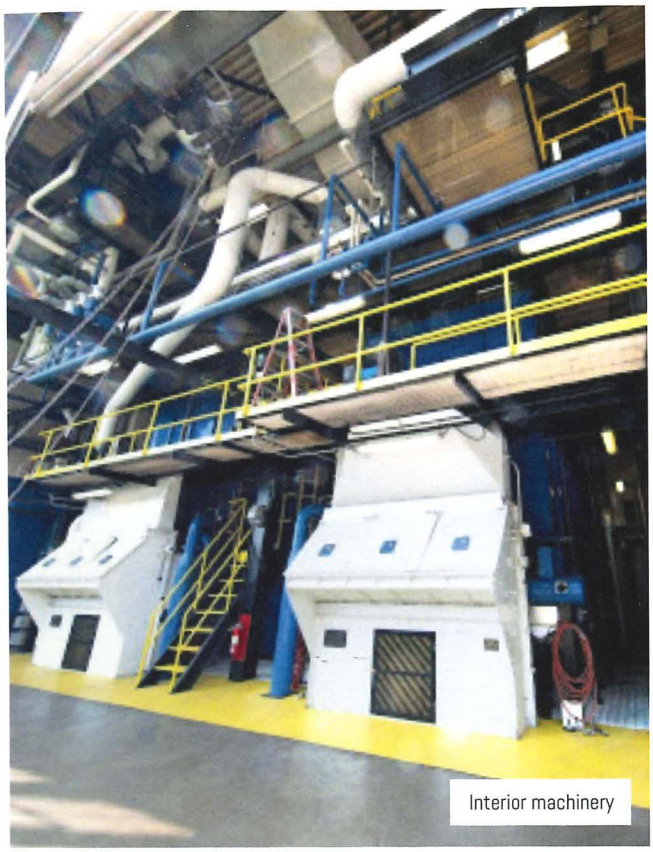
The transition from coal to a mixture of natural gas and heating oil appeared after a statewide initiative last year, acting with four other campuses in the University of Wisconsin System to reduce emission rates.

The steam produced is pumped across campus through a series of underground steam lines, according to University Archive records.

"We normally have a crew of eight fulltime employees here at the plant," said heating plant superintendent Brian Lorenz. He says the plant is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

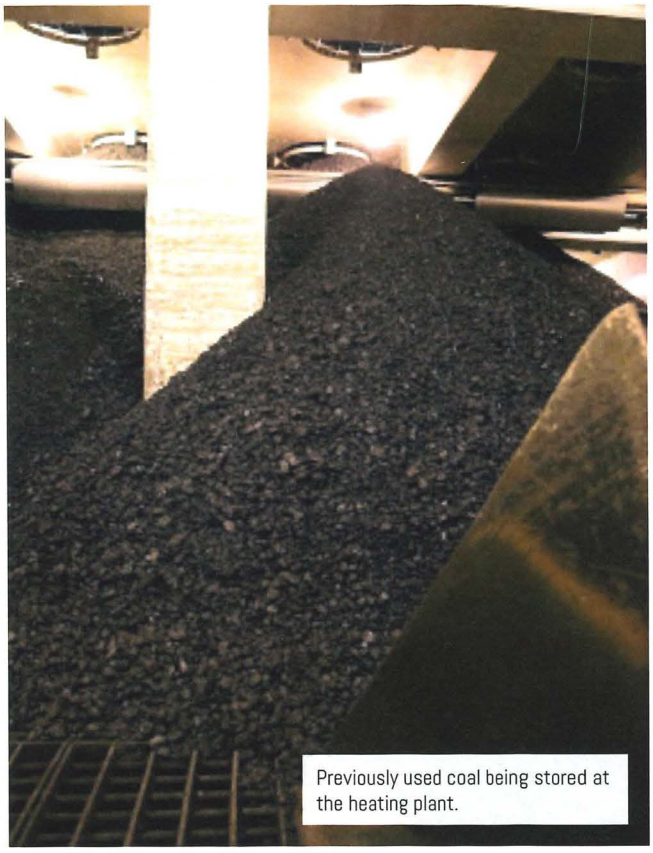
Sarah Rykal, UW-Stout's campus sustainability manager, worked alongside Lorenz and the Wisconsin Department of Administration to make the conversion possible. "Our campus' goal is to be carbon neutral by 2050. This transition away from coal is helpful in achieving that goal." Rykal said.

Prior to what many residents still believe—that coal has been the sole heat source since day one—



UW-STOUT/CONTRIBUTED

Interior machinery



UW-STOUT/CONTRIBUTED

Previously used coal being stored at the heating plant.

the plant has actually been slowly moving away from the combustible rock for quite some time now. In fact, Rykal said, "We have primarily used natural gas for many years, and we used coal and heating oil as back-up sources, primarily during the coldest weeks of the winter."

"Using natural gas still creates greenhouse gas emissions, but coal has much greater emissions than natural gas. So, this move helped to reduce our campus' emissions." Rykal said.

But after so many years of defending campus facilities from winter's dipping temperatures, some steam lines have begun showing signs of deterioration. Still under consideration, the steam lines that connect north campus to the central heating plant are in need of attention.

A 2019 feasibility study run by MEP Associates, examined the possibility of disconnecting north campus from the main heat source and replacing it with its own geothermal system.

According to the study, "A variety of design concepts including centralized hot water boilers, water-cooled chillers, variable refrigerant flow (VRF) systems, heat pumps and geo-exchange will be evaluated as potential candidates."

The geothermal system would be in charge of heating and cooling north campus facilities with renewable geothermal energy produced from the earth.

The disconnect has since been abandoned as the feasibility study proved that up-front costs to install a geothermal system on north campus would be too steep, according to campus officials.

"We hired MEP Associates in Eau Claire to do a feasibility study for geothermal, but the up-front costs to install the system were prohibitive." Rykal said.

Another option considered was a secondary natural gas-powered heating plant on north campus. But again, costs acted as a deterrent. "It would require additional labor to staff the second heating plant." Rykal said.

At this time, Rykal says it seems like the university will likely fix the degrading steam lines that connect the two grids by repairing or replacing them.•

SENDING POSITIVTY WITH EVERY MEAL

VIOLET NELSON

JUSTIN KRAHN/CONTRIBUTED

One-of-a-kind artwork from the children at the Child and Family Study Center.

Although many things have been lost from the pandemic, kindness on college campuses is not one of them, especially at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. An initiative put into action at Stout is sending positive vibes and support to sick and quarantined students on campus.

The initiative was started by the Chancellor's office and campus marketing and communications. Virtual hug cards and artwork made by the children of the Child and Family Study Center are sent to students in quarantine.

The children at the Child and Family Study Center make new, one-of-a-kind cards and artwork every two weeks. Once the price commons receives the cards and artwork, they are sent across campus for faculty and staff to fill out with brief notes of encouragement .

They are then transported to the quarantined students alongside recovery meals made by the dining services. The recovery meals are delivered to on-campus students in isolation or quarantine. What's better than encouragement and food?

When Justin Krahn, director of university dining services, was asked about the future of this initiative, he was optimistic. "I can see initiatives like this continuing in some way in the future," Krahn said.

Krahn also said his favorite part about this initiative is seeing all the support from everyone on campus for the students to help bring some positive thoughts and vibes.

This campus initiative helped spread positivity with every meal to students in quarantine.•

JUSTIN KRAHN/CONTRIBUTED

Cards that held words of encouragement from faculty and staff.

HEROES WELCOME

ROBERT TIMMLER

John Hansen, Owner, standing in front of the counter at Heroes Welcome.

ROBERT TIMMLER/STOUTONIA

The Main floor of Heroes Welcome.

ROBERT TIMMLER/STOUTONIA

JUSTIN KRAHN/CONTRIBUTED

JUSTIN KRAHN/CONTRIBUTED

Heroes Welcome is the local comic book, card and board game store that has been serving the town of Menomonie since Feb. 2015. Heroes Welcome is where anyone can come in to get comics, both old and new, from Marvel and DC along with other popular characters and series.

The comic book selection ranges from single issues for those looking to get acquainted with a popular character and volumes for those seeking the complete series. The store has a special glass case that holds famous comic books from well-known storylines, many of which are rare and very hard to find elsewhere. There are also collections of manga and superhero novels for those who are looking for something other than comic books.

John Hansen, owner of the store, is proud of what his business is today. Hansen started Heroes Welcome because he wanted to do something he loved for a living. He said, "Comics and games are something I enjoy and I wanted to do it for a living."

Hansen explained why he chose to set up shop in Menomonie. "It's a good area. It's right next to the college which is the market age group I was looking for. I also wanted the store to be in a place where I could hold big events," he said.

People interested in card and board games will find a wide selection of games at the store. The spectrum of games will satisfy those who are role-playing fanatics or simply average people looking for a new board game to play with their family. Heroes Welcome has everything for "fans of Warhammer 4000", "Dungeons and Dragons", "Pokémon", "Magic: The Gathering" and other related board games. Furthermore, Heroes Welcome is a hangout spot for people to chill with their friends and play a game.

Heroes Welcome also offers card game enthusiasts supplementary accessories like card binders, card sleeves and card pages to protect and easily transport cards from place to place. The store caters to role-players as well and stores a multitude of items for "Dungeons and Dragons" players from miniatures, dice bags, trays, playmats and the playmat tube. Heroes Welcome likewise has supplies for artists and future comic book designers like comic supplies, paint and paintbrushes.

Hansen said he used social media to get the word out, "I advertised on Facebook since it's a free platform. Individuals

HEROES WELCOME

ROBERT TIMMLER

Roleplaying guides and expansion packs for the many roleplaying games sold at Heroes Welcome.

ROBERT TIMMLER/STOUTONIA

started coming in right away, but in the beginning, the customer base was small. Then more and more people started coming into the store. People would come in and ask if they could play with their friends at the store."

The store started to gain more customers. Hansen said, "Customers started bringing things into the store, like someone from the Warhammer group brought in a Warhammer table which added to the group's gameplay."

Hansen has done two renovations to his store. "When the store started to build up in popularity, I decided to expand it out by taking out a wall that used to be part of a smaller room," he said. "And then when the six weeklong shutdown happened during the pandemic, I took that time to rearrange the store and add shelves to put up more board games and comic supplies."

Hansen said he takes safety precautions to protect his customers. "I clean the main touch-points daily and provide customers with curbside pickup if they ask for it. I also have spare masks if a customer doesn't have one, but that hasn't been an issue so far."

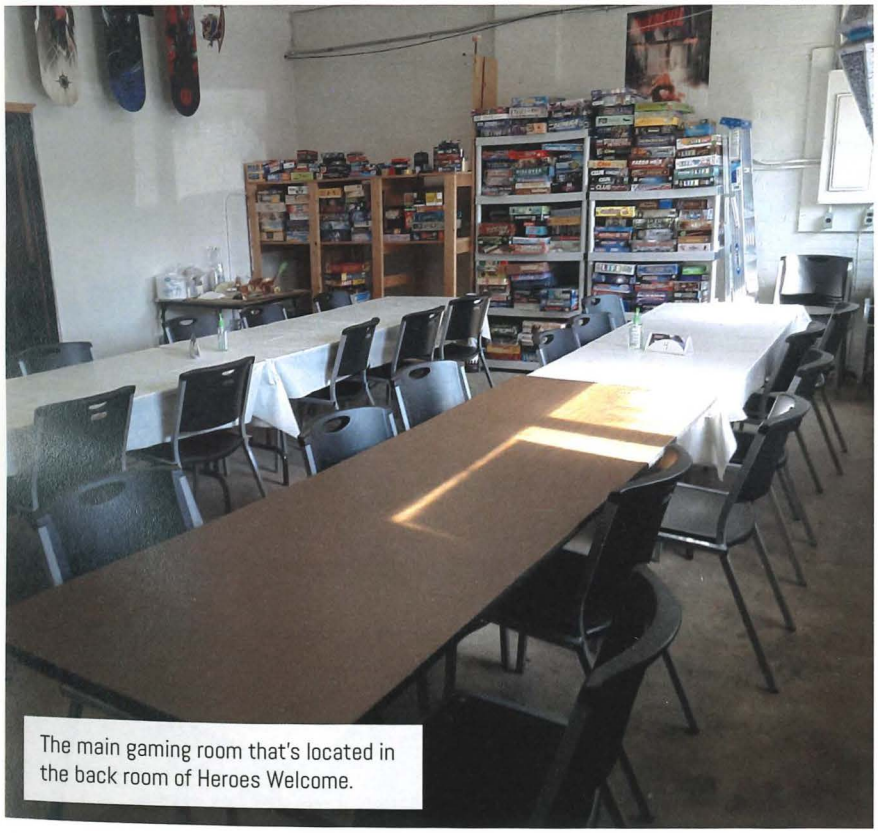
Heroes Welcome is a store that offers those who feel alone a spot to make new friends. Customers can get creative with their characters, interact with others and go on entertaining, playful adventures. The community has helped shape the business into what it is today and has made the store a staple of the community.

In the end, it's a store where people come together to create lasting memories playing games or reading comic books.

"The community created it on their own," Hansen said. •

The glass case that holds the famous comic books.

ROBERT TIMMLER/STOUTONIA



The main gaming room that's located in the back room of Heroes Welcome.

ROBERT TIMMLER/STOUTONIA

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THE NEW MORNING ROUTINE

VIOLET NELSON

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With the absence of classroom settings due to COVID-19, students and staff have adjusted their wardrobe and routines to the pandemic lifestyle.

Now with mostly online classes, students have the comfortability to stay in bed (if they chose to) while attending their classes. By having the freedom to not go anywhere, the option of getting dressed for the day is not as necessary as it once was. Pajamas or loungewear are efficient enough to sit at home in front of a computer screen.

Removing a routine can have an impact on an individual's motivation. Students were faced with a major adjustment to figure out a new and improved morning routine.

Maddie Gilbertson, a winter 2020 graduate from the professional communication and emerging media program, said that she hardly ever wears makeup anymore.

She said not putting on makeup sometimes affected her mood.

"Because I had no motivation to do anything when I was in school... I learned to accept the fact that no one is going to see me under my mask anyway, so it didn't bother me that way, but at the end of the day not having to get ready for class definitely killed me," Gilbertson said.

Haley Hahn, who will be graduating in Dec. 2021 from the graphic design program, said, "I use clothing and fashion as a motivational tool with school."

Hahn said clothing adds another layer of explanation to who individuals are and what they choose to create. But when it comes to meeting online, she said, "Only showing my face on camera feels like people are missing out on a huge part of myself."

Clothing is a way of expression and it can lift an individual's mood to have a good day, but a lot of individuals have stopped getting ready since the pandemic started. If anything, the pandemic has taught us to figure out a new balanced yet motivational

routine that still lets us express ourselves.

Adjusting to a new routine and mentality swayed individual wardrobes. With the introduction of Zoom and Microsoft Teams, people can now get away with only looking professional or decent from the waist up.

Many people said their wardrobe started to lean more towards loungewear since most people are still working or going to school from home.

Not only students developed the new routine. Katherine Frank, UW-Stout's eighth chancellor, said she too has adjusted to a slightly different wardrobe. "When I am at the institution, it is what you might expect, although I am never what you might expect," she said.

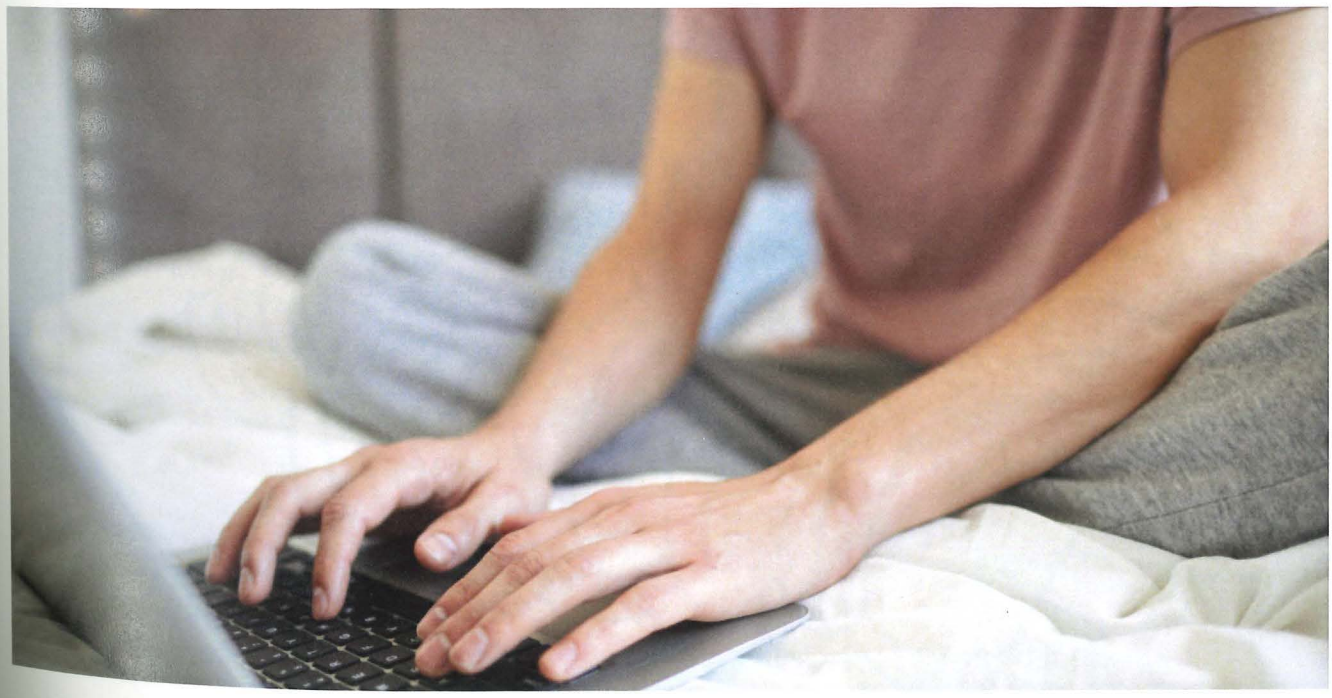
With the curve of routine and style, to make things more enjoyable, Chancellor Frank said she always enjoys adding a little "pop" to her daily outfits, whether online or in-person.

"At home, it is all about what you can see from the waist up, right now I have jeans on," she said through a Microsoft Teams meeting.

With new adjustments due to COVID-19, it is all about finding a routine that suits individuals properly. While developing a new style to be comfortable at home.

If you are still in need of styling tips, Chancellor Frank says, adding a sense of color and creativity never hurts. •

UNSPLASH.COM/**CONTRIBUTED**



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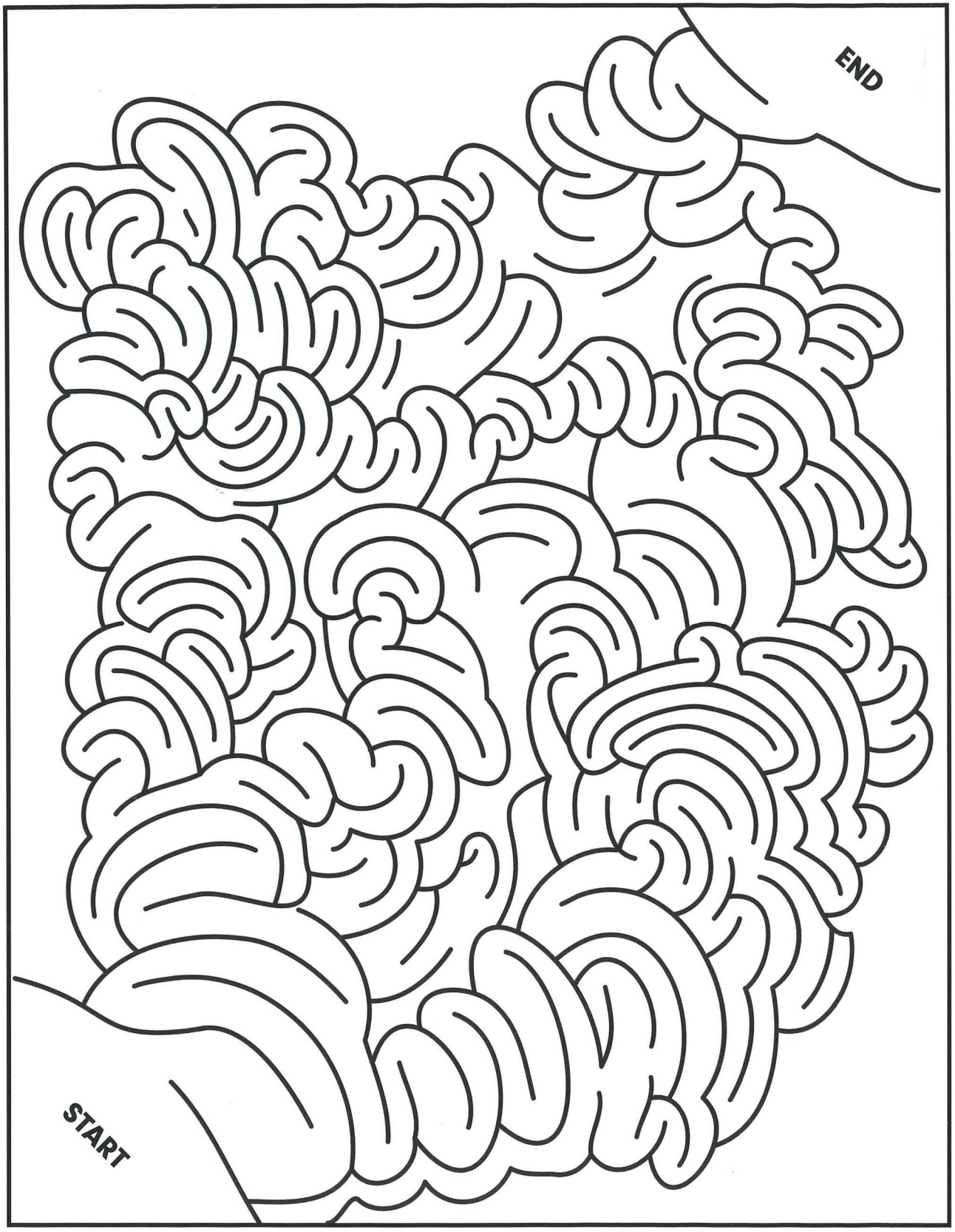
MAZE



RYAN MEZERA/STOUTONIA

WORD SEARCH

H A P U P B C Q O D R S F Z A P I R
W O D K Q Y P O L Y T E C H N I C K
K S T U D E N T G J E V P V W S B F
Z L U A S X A A O H O M E W O R K T
S C H O L A R S H I P H B E B H Z X
K U U W O L W Z N Y Q M A J O R B S
E L C N B B Y Y O B O S Y G K H N R
K U X N L G B L U E D E V I L Y Q W
V H U I A A Z L I B R A R Y V M T R
T R K G Z C A M P U S A A A S H V B
M X J T E U S T B F Y Q L R V D G Z
P I S T O U T S V B A H A O Q L Z K
H A P U P B C Q O D R S F Z A P I R
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K S T U D E N T G J E V P V W S B F
Z L U A S X A A O H O M E W O R K T
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K U U W O L W Z N Y Q M A J O R B S
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V H U I A A Z L I B R A R Y V M T R
T R K G Z C A M P U S A A A S H V B
M X J T E U S T B F Y Q L R V D G Z
P I S T O U T S V B A H A O Q L Z K

BLAZE
BLUE DEVIL
HOMEWORK
GRADUATION
DORM
STOUT
STUDENT
LIBRARY
DIPLOMA
LABS
POLYTECHNIC
MAJOR
CHANCELLOR
TUITION
MSC
CAMPUS
SCHOLARSHIP
PROFESSOR
TUTOR
TEXTBOOKS

FASHION WITHOUT FABRIC

EMMA OZARK

Fashion Without Fabric, or FWOF, is an (in)famous University of Wisconsin–Stout art project and competition normally required for 3D design experience -- a fundamental class for any art or design major. Unfortunately, it has been canceled this year due to the pandemic. The competition is pretty much what it sounds like: Students design (based on a specific prompt) a wearable piece of fashion without standard fabric and present it on the runway. So what would a COVID-themed FWOF look like? Comics artist Emma Ozark takes a comedic guess at the potential projects students could create.

EMMA OZARK/STOUTONIA

Balloon Buddy

After being called "Balloon Buddy" at their job because they wore gloves, this student expressed their frustration in a literal sense by modifying a giant inflatable balloon with extending arms, intended so they never have to touch anyone. They take it one step further and give "Balloon Buddy" an outfit made of balloons with beach-ball shorts and shoes.

EMMA OZARK/STOUTONIA

Cyber Chaos

This student represents the many ways computers have taken over our lives after the pandemic. As attending a Zoom call, they secured a computer monitor onto a brightly decorated, one-armed mannequin. It is dressed with excess computer chords, a skirt made of Tweets and a battery inspired pelvis, which powers a remote-controlled office chair that allows the student to drive up and down the runway remotely.

We ran a poll over on our Instagram page @stoutoniaonline, asking students to vote on their favorite design, and Bubble Buddy was the winner!

Be sure to follow us on Instagram to stay up to date on news & participate in fun polls like this!

@STOUTONIAONLINE

EMMA OZARK/STOUTONIA

Dr. Distanced

Inspired by the resurgence of medieval imagery and the influx of home remedies for bread-making in light of the pandemic, this student took to enforcing social distancing through a more direct, homemade approach -- a six foot tall pole and a five foot long mask -- to keep away any potential plague-bringers from all angles. They also sport a stitched quilt-cape of hardened slices of bread.

EMMA OZARK/STOUTONIA

Queen of Forgotten Plastics

The Queen of Forgotten Plastics wants you RECYCLE, RECYCLE, RECYCLE! Inspired to raise awareness surrounding ocean pollution, such as masks found in the Mediterranean, she draws attention to the issue with her blue-tinted makeup and plastic-lined wig, styled as if she were underwater. Her outfit is strapped together with miscellaneous PPE. And the queen is also sporting fancy jewelry made from plastic debris she found cleaning the ocean.

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT: TAYLOR SCHUMANN

ISABEL ROBERTS

Taylor Schumann is a Junior from Wisconsin Dells, WI and majoring in graphic design and interactive media with concentration in communications and a minor in printmaking at the University of Wisconsin-Stout.

TAYLOR SCHUMANN/CONTRIBUTED

Learn Like You Campaign, 2020

TAYLOR SCHUMANN/CONTRIBUTED

War is Peace, 1984 Movie Promotion, 2019

Why did you decide to pursue art as a career?

I chose Art and Design as my career path pretty late in my high school career, simply because everyone told me there was no money to be made in art. I was convinced I wanted to be an English teacher but am so glad that I did take the plunge to take art classes my Junior year of high school. I don't want to wake up every day and do the same thing, and Art and Design offers so much freedom in career paths, I can get a job at a huge agency or work out of my own at-home studio and live on freelance, and I can live anywhere in the world while I do it. Art and Design is universal, and that was a huge appeal for me when I began seriously considering it as a career path.

What messages do you like to portray through your art?

My art and design is always evolving, as is the messages that I want to portray with the work I do. As of late I have been focusing a lot on accessibility, inclusivity, and sustainability in my process. I feel that this is something that as a traditionally taught artist and designer I haven't had a lot of experience including into my process and want to bring more conversation about all of them into the art and design community. I also have recently using my work as an expression of internalized conflict that I have been struggling with regarding trauma, sexuality, and identity, and want to use my fine art moving forward to explore and normalize questioning things and working through past experiences.

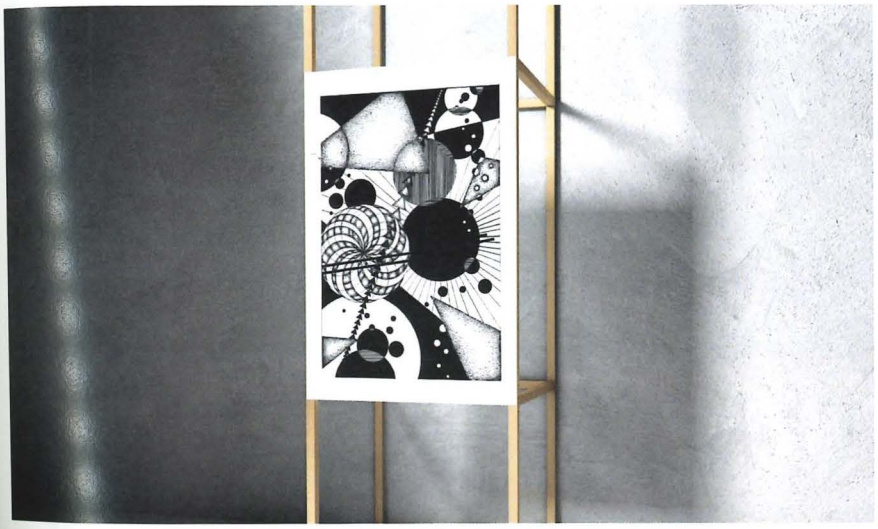
Do you have a favorite medium that you like to use?

As a person who leans more heavily on the design side of art and design, I've always valued cleaner mediums, but as of late have really fell in love with Relief Printmaking. There's something so intrinsic about the entire process and result, and it in many ways makes the work feel so much more real, and raw. Something about creating work with your own two hands instead of simply making a mass reproducible image on a computer makes the work have a deeper impact. Particularly with the ability to use the time while carving the block and printing to meditate on things that you may otherwise not have the time to think about.

TAYLOR SCHUMANN/CONTRIBUTED

Duality of Love, 2021

TAYLOR SCHUMANN/CONTRIBUTED



Dynamic, 2019

What's your favorite piece of work you've done and why?

To this day my poster design I did for a hypothetical movie re-make of George Orwell's cult classic 1984 I made in Graphic Design 1 still has to be my favorite piece I've done so far. There's such a simplicity to using type as image, and I think that part of why I fell in love with design was the process of creating, and the challenge of creating unique solutions to complex issues in visual communication. That project was one of the first times I was able to dig deep into my process and really explore what design principles are important to my aesthetic as a designer, and there's so much sentimental value to that piece for me because of that. I also am super proud of my Learn Like You Campaign that I did last semester, I was able to attend the AdFed awards and received a Bronze Pin for the advertising campaign. I got to explore frame by frame animation and it was such a good learning experience to bring a product to life and build an entire campaign from the ground up.

Why did you choose to go to UW-Stout?

Stout was actually the only school I applied for! In high school I didn't start taking art classes until my junior year, and I instantly knew I wanted to go into art as a career. At the time, we had a temporary teacher who only taught one section of 2D Art, and she is a Stout Alumni. As soon as she saw my work and spoke to me, she suggested the Art and Design program at Stout. I looked into it and knew that this is where I was meant to be for my undergrad.

Do you have any tips for the aspiring artist?

Art and Design can be very overwhelming to walk into as a young artist, and especially in the age of technology, it can be hard to create in spaces where you are constantly comparing yourself and your work to other artists. My biggest piece of advice to anyone who wants to join the art and design community is to turn off the screens and spend time cultivating your own process and your own passions. While it is good to gain inspiration from the communities around you and it's valuable to learn from looking at other people's work, make sure you are also sharing your own process and work. I promise you that by being an active member of the community, online or in a traditional sense, you will gain more than being a passive participant. Keep on creating and share your work with the world!

ATHLETE SPOTLIGHT: JACK CERNOHOUS

RYAN MEZERA

Jack Cernohous (Ice Hockey) is a Senior from Hudson, WI and majoring in mechanical engineering at the University of Wisconsin-Stout.

UW-STOUT ATHLETICS/CONTRIBUTED

UW-STOUT ATHLETICS/CONTRIBUTED

What foods/drinks help you gear up and stay energized for games?

Chicken and rice along with Gatorade.

What is your most memorable sporting experience?

Scoring my first college goal for Stout on the penalty kill.

What is the strangest talent you have?

Driving the Zamboni.

What was your favorite TV show when growing up?

Trailer Park Boys.

At which store would you like to max-out your credit card?

Nike Outlet

What are your long-term goals after graduation?

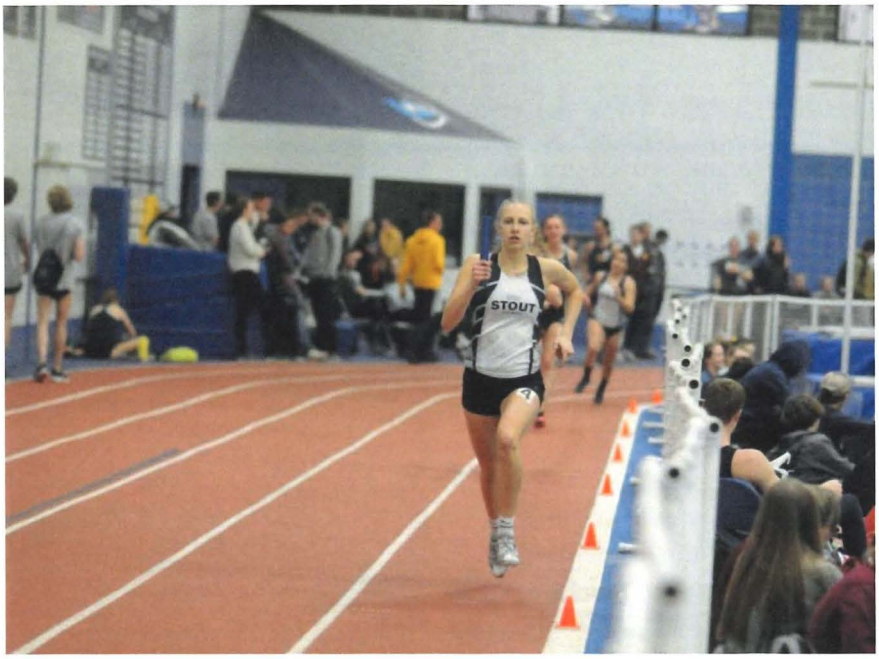
Starting a family of my own someday.

ATHLETE SPOTLIGHT: GRACE MAURER

RYAN MEZERA

Grace Maurer (Track & Field) is a Junior from Rogers, MN and majoring in professional communication and emerging media with a digital humanities concentration at the University of Wisconsin-Stout.

LAYNE PITT/CONTRIBUTED



LAYNE PITT/CONTRIBUTED

What foods/drinks help you gear up and stay energized for games?

I usually just stick to water and Gatorade for drinks. The main snacks I eat on meet/gamedays are oatmeal, bananas with peanut butter and pretzels.

What is your most memorable sporting experience?

My most memorable sporting experience was last year at the indoor track conference meet. My 4x400 relay got fourth and podiumed, so it was pretty exciting.

What is the strangest talent you have?

Not really sure if this is a talent, but I can write on my skin (like with my nails) and it will become raised (kind of like a hive) so you can easily see it, it's called dermatographia.

What was your favorite TV show when growing up?

I loved watching iCarly as a kid.

At which store would you like to max-out your credit card?

Definitely Target

What are your long-term goals after graduation?

I would like to start out working for a company's marketing/communications department, doing website building, content creation or digital marketing. And later move into a more specific field.

THE 'SCOPES

ROBERT TIMMLER

ARIES *(March 21 – April 19)*
You will find a three-eyed mutant fish at the bottom of Lake Menomin. It will taste like chicken.

TAURUS *(April 20 – May 20)*
Economics 101 will prove to be a tricky class to pass. Not that you're bad at Economics, it's just that you keep falling asleep during class and waking up in Psychology 207.

GEMINI *(May 21 – June 20)*
Your laptop will never connect to the StoutSecure again. You can retype your password as many times as you want, but you'll find no luck in doing so. Man, your school year is going to be one for the books. Best of luck.

CANCER *(June 21 – July 22)*
You will discover that some of the professors teaching at Stout are actually aliens in disguise, but like cool aliens that just want to teach you chemistry, math and how to take over the human race through social media marketing.

LEO *(July 23 – August 22)*
You will find a hidden door on the third floor of Harvey Hall that will lead you to a parallel dimension that looks exactly like ours. The only difference is that the muffins from the MSC will be easier to open.

VIRGO *(August 23 – September 22)*
You will forget to return your textbook at the end of the semester. That will cost you $300 and a hand as a reminder to return your textbooks next semester. Librarians are very strict.

LIBRA *(September 23 – October 22)*
The secret identity of Blaze will be revealed to you. He's Batman. You're welcome.

TYLER MULLEN/STOUTONIA

SCORPIO *(October 23 – November 21)*
Birds will keep crashing into the windows of every room you enter. Are they following you?

SAGITTARIUS *(November 22 – December 21)*
You will come across the hunchback that lives in Jarvis and create a loving friendship with him. Well, that's adorable.

CAPRICORN *(December 22 – January 19)*
A giant gorilla will climb to the top of the Bowman Clock Tower while holding you in his enormous grip. You're a blonde, right?

AQUARIUS *(January 20 – February 18)*
A Canadian tuxedo will be the lucky charm of your next Zoom interview.

PISCES *(February 19 – March 20)*
Even by the time of an apocalypse, South Hall will never be remodeled.

UPDATE ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING MARKET FOR SQUIRRELS

RYAN MEZERA

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS/CONTRIBUTED

The affordable housing market for squirrels residing on University of Wisconsin-Stout's campus is feeling the effects of a recent price elevation scheme for the first time since Andrew Tainter and Henry Stout closed the doors to Knapp, Stout & Co. logging mill in 1901.

Effective as of May 5, the rent for all squirrels living on campus property will be raised to a minimum of 10 acorns per month, per household, according to Tree Dweller Agency (TDA) authorities.

The TDA is a globally recognized initiative passed by Surgeon Squirrel of the Government of Authoritative Squirrels that acts to hold all squirrels accountable for fiscal and civic duties.

The news was broadcasted as an official statement from the TDA and publicly announced last Monday to all local critter forums on and within a 3-acre radius of UW-Stout's campus.

The increase to 10 acorns is exactly twice the number of acorns the TDA originally required as a monthly minimum for squirrels who built homes on the college campus. This started shortly after the TWA monopolized Stout's nesting market in 2001.

The fee increase came as nothing less than a shock to squirrels occupying the area.

One resident, Nutsy, a grey squirrel, is fed up with the overbearing fees. "My great, great grandsquirrel told me before the damn Dwellers (TDA) got here, rent was as low as two acorns," Nutsy said. He lived in a white oak tree adjacent to the south side of the Memorial Student Center for over six years.

Many squirrels, Nutsy included, have since relocated after Monday's announcement, some occupying the corner of Wilson Avenue and 6th Street E. Packed with multiple white oaks, the block has faced issues with overcrowding in the past due to the location's low tree-cover and traffic noise.

Local squirrels consider the area as somewhat of a "squirrel slum" and designated for lower-class squirrels and outcasts. According to Nutsy, "Do these guys think acorns grow on trees or somethin'? Like, come on... Cut your fluffy buddy some slack." •

LET THE DOGS SPEAK

RYAN MEZERA

Do you ever find yourself making decisions for your dog? Do you ever ask yourself, "How can I set my dog up with the life they want?" The Humane Society of the United States and the Humane Society Legislative Fund, on Jan. 20, called for President Joseph R. Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris to help maintain a commitment to further federal animal welfare policy. To help our leaders do just this, it is important to be as inclusive as possible and consider what our furry friends have to say. We talked to a couple local dogs to get the inside scoop on how the pandemic is going for them—doggy style! After all, with all the joy they bring us, they should get a chance to have their own voices heard.

UNSPLASH.COM/CONTRIBUTED

SPUNKERS, GOLDEN RETRIEVER

UNSPLASH.COM/CONTRIBUTED

MACI, ENGLISH POINTER

All right Spunkers, what do you have to say about the state of our nation right now?

I guess I would say I need to be more informed about what's happening out there. I should've watched the evening news with my dad last night, but he gave me a turkey and potato flavored pig's ear right before he turned it on. I couldn't focus!

Has your dad been around the house more than usual since the COVID pandemic started?

Yeah, now that you say that he has been around the house more and more! I've recently heard the word COVID a bunch, but I thought it was maybe some kind of new chew toy that I'd be able to get my paws on. What's a pandemic?

With your dad being around the house more, has he been taking you on more walks than before?

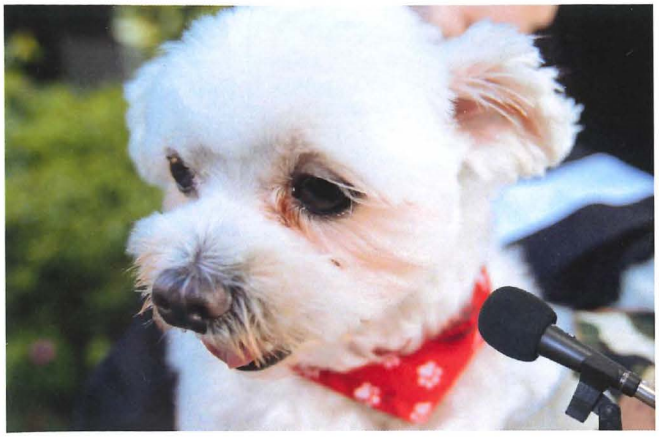
Oh yeah. Instead of just walking around the block, we've been going to the dog park like every day. He always wears this weird piece of cloth over his face, though. What's that all about?

Over the past few months, have you noticed a difference in the behavior of your owner?

She's been moping around the apartment a lot more. She's always eating Lunchables and buttered popcorn and talking to her computer. I thought maybe she got fired from her job, but her work phone still rings all the time. She changed her ringtone to "The Sound of Silence" by Simon & Garfunkel. Personally, I love their music.

Have you had many visitors come to your apartment?

No! My mom used to always have my Auntie Karen over for "wine Wednesdays", but I haven't seen her since my last trip to the doggy doctor. I thought that if I sat by the door with my head super low, paw up and tail pointed, maybe I would smell her coming. But I can't get a whiff!



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SIBERIA, MALTESE

What is your favorite part of the day, Siberia?

Well, I used to spend about 3 to 4 hours a day looking at myself in the hallway mirror admiring how my black bowtie made my white coat pop. Now, my mom makes me wear a different color every day. I'm wearing a yellow one right now. I look like I accidently peed on my head! I'm an independent, well-groomed Maltese. Why can't I wear what I want?

ZEUS, GREAT DANE

Zeus, your dad now works remotely from home. Do you like having him around all the time?

Okay, listen here human. I love my daddy. He knows exactly where I like my ears scratched and even gives me Ziwi Peak Venison dog food instead of that boring, dry Rice & Vegetable Pedigree crap I used to get. But I'm pushing 85 in dog years. I like my peace and quiet. I wouldn't mind having the house to myself now and again, at least for a couple hours so I can snooze on the sofa. For Air Bud's sake, what's a dog have to do to get a beer around here?

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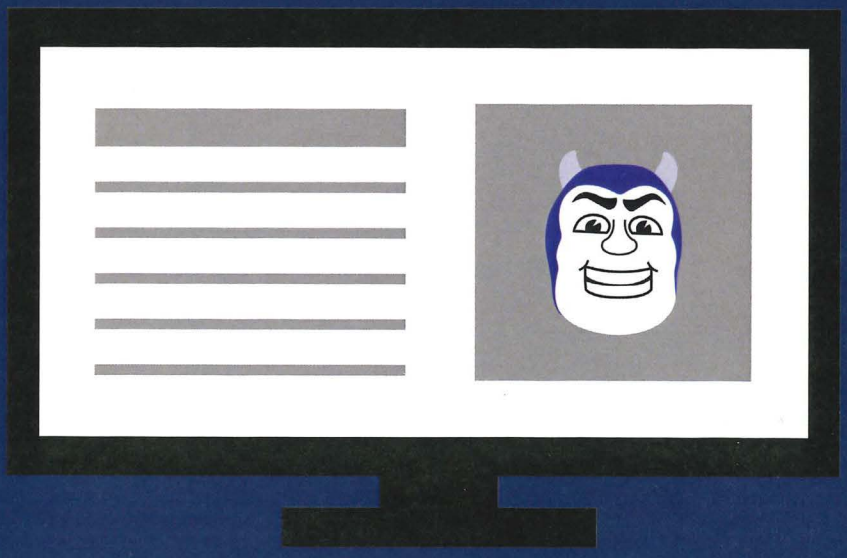
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